

STITCH AND HEM AND LINE AND FLIGHT

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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A B S T R A C T

Stitch and hem and line and flight appears in three formats. There is this present one, which adheres to the manuscript design requirements as outlined by The Graduate School at The University of Utah; there is another which is a book six inches high by nine inches wide, printed in three colors, with text aligned to its gutter; and there is a broadside printed from the same forms of standing metal type on a single twelve-inch-high by nineteen-inch-wide page, where all spreads are registered to the same points so that all lines of all sections overlap exactly, excluding the last lines of the longest section, which are left immediately readable. The second and the third formats were produced in editions of fifty each, and copies are available to the reader through the Special Collections Library at the J. Willard Marriott Library. The text in the book you're holding is built from scans taken from the original letterpress pages, and so honors typos not caught before production during proofreading, but does not honor the final runs of production which overprint eight typos and overprint one duplicated "no." The text here stands as an uncorrected and reformatted transcript of the letterpress-printed pages, since all "characters must be clear and sharp. Smudged, indistinct, or blurred letters are not acceptable." The present format cannot ask (at least not in the same way) if the techniques and repetitive labor of hand printing can be read just as one might read any of the other more familiar small crises in a work: the line break, the influence of a culture or history on that work, anagnorisis, exegesis, etc. The present format doesn't seem to ask questions like: what happens to a love song when you can't read it or hear it? How does a line or letter make itself mean when cast in metal, stood up and pressed onto paper? Still, the present format is concerned with how a line sits on a page and how a line is like love is like highs is like sand.

The text all these formats contain is a love song with a one-note melody, no instrumentation and no meter. A love song so long as a love song marks a missing person. Each paragraph is composed from a number of radiating lines that cross and pattern as sound, as image, and as a content. Lines that, when they intersect, are triangulating the assemblage of a proliferating and shifting continent. So a line of text might contain narcotics, a desert, a(nti)theism or grass or a curtain, a child, things that no longer fly, a tower: a line can be what it says, a line can be an idea had or put down. And a line can be a stripe of letters all standing on their feet, sharing a baseline across the page; or a pen dragged across paper: a line can be an image, or part of making one. And when spelled or sounded, a line is a person's name, how that person came to that name and how that name emits or omits itself as a word from a landscape that a person is unwilling to inhabit. A line like this is an escape route that won't lead to any havens, but will hide a body.

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While I muse on the effects of flowing and I am sieved from time to time by hallucinations in which I myself begin to take vault in the flow. More and more it becomes just sand to me. Or once a thousand feet above from where I stand, a skin on the leaden sea gathered in emanating lines from a point of rock, a corner of a mouth in stitches. When soils shrugged off water, islands came inland after me. Waves of water or the waves of flesh and the waves of sand to come will not be stopped if all he says is lineages. I leave a city where patronymic genesis is the genesis of a timeline sham, where a people has mistaken veins on a vellum map for traced lines that march through straits, up rivers, between watersheds. Lines powerful and insubstantial, precise and invisible, hematological principals untraced by surveyors give us this metaphysics. The people striate. The people streak blood from here to a clovis adam. They mistake again, this tracing for the animate territory. But where the tyranny of the mein is eliminated from all faulted lineaments and thistle, a new world boasts. I walk the sea floor risen between twin hills. I walk below the very waterline of time. I stop to stand on an altar in the sun. Here is an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points and dimples or objects and lakes but rather on haecceities, on sets of relations: winds, rolling sands, the songs of the sands or the creakings of wood. I am on a high plateau whose streams have no communication left with the rest of the world. So little moisture here the only a gnat can find is in the corner of my eye. I blink it away. I tap my sclera. I extract this one alive and whole to keep. Later I will pin it to a board. This was never a master plan: to recollect in a territory. I malign. I beg your pardon. At once I flee in four cardinal directions. At once, ten-thousand years ago I had a wife and children. It will be a nine day's journey. I will be my own mouth unless you come compass me back. I say Take me then to the ten thousand lakes. Take me then to Erie or Superior. On a thousand dollars I could pay off debts and reach any lake but this lake and yet Here

I am before inhuman metamorphoses. Where mats of gnats twist up like a Niolitic plague and where shoals of dead artemia mark tidal lines on the shore of this life threatening body of water with reeds. But my huntress, my partner in arms. Where? Women who work against surfaces inspire me to things and she was not. I'd seen her before. Everything the earth has ever been, gathered together in one apologizing vision. I demand my sea level risen. I demand my school shooting and my inundation. I demand an innovation in land ownership recognizing that the amount of land every single individual requires is not less than the surface of the earth. Still, I am ruin six feet tall in flats. I am ruin an eighth of a milliter across. My palms cover continents.

Only the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud to keep the eye busy on an undetermined play. An idol is just stone or wood to me: it sees not, it hears not. I am preoccupied with the invisible these days. But then ten curtains of twisted linen, banded together five and five may they become twin hanging walls. Wall of scarlet, wall of turquoise, wall of purple, and a line of embroidered poppy blossoms to limn the twill stitch. May there be loops of a fine blue at the fringe and clasps of gold and clasps of bronze to make a whole. A door of woven goat hair, a covering of rams' skins. Four fine walls mask the place where I will be embalmed alive. I inhale. A twig table bears melon rind, and a bronze bowl bears fragrant incense of the finest shelled spices. Of borage five-hundred grains, and of sweet smelling lemon half again as much. Two-hundred-fifty grains of aromatic cane and five-hundred of strawberries—measured by the sanctuary grain. Add a hin of oil, a syrup of clove, Gascoigne's powder. Swallow this bezoar to pass an impacted stone. Or here add hyacinth, draw Venice treacle from the treacle well. Two grains and one of saffron dissolved in a flask of canary wine and mix in a drachm of cinnamon powder and of clove. Leave in a vapor bath for three days. For sale, two dollars, a paper packet in twine. I will find the empyrean limit if it kills me in twinned etched pills. This is paradise: this is paradise: pills to powder, new lovers coming from everywhere then. This is the true sustenance in a tent lined with rugs, rugs lined with smokers who rest comfortably on no pillows. Inside the light is a film, a filth on all things. The air is the air is thick, and sweet. In the bronze bowl there burns incense from a residue. By twists and urns, another fine lined red velvet curtain, folded and folded to twist and fold, ten-thousand miles of it seems. A room is pressed in another. Another is empty, save an empty temple which never ends uncovered as it has nothing to show. Nothing but a black hole or deep regard without color beyond red. The curtain shelters only its own cactus needle and mainline. Hence the ingenious surprise

when I open, am allowed to open, or by my own rite open the little room. After so many ritual detours to gain access, I enter the dwelling place, and nothing, but I've disturbed no recumbants. I rest here stationary eight to ten hours where comes a man with a noseless vised head and a monstrous lipless grin emitting saliva filaments which snatch glancing light. Before I catch a glimpse he slips the dilating orifice behind the pale red gossamer veil stitched from red petals that keeps a stranger from fainting dead away. Laughter comes at his sight of me. I've seen a laughing man before. He aims to enlist a co-pilot in flight across the Paris-Chinese border. He insists while twisting my menial shirt stitch in his fist. He says My wars know no states. He says Walk with me the lines great armies of the world are loath to cross en masse. He laughs at more. He's turned his profit. The firmament shines mountain leveling light if he transmutes gold into iron, converts the heaven in my head till even clouds solidify. Is that the earth down there? My tongue is numb. What I enjoy does not belong to me. What was most familiar becomes most foreign. I shift dependencies, I practice at scales. Now a music in distant voices is easy to come by. All I have to do is sing.

As if a built structure could only hit the ground while the interior might keep on falling unchecked forever. The anonymous collapsing into the personal. An airport tower seized by lunatics stands tall. Windows pitched out at the top, once tinted black, now shifted purple under the stilled sun, so much sun you forget night ever comes to this place. Windows held fast by welds and epoxy, the tower rises reasoned over a desert. Its crossbeams and sheet metal the wind rips at, finding slats, breaking rivets. The building shakes. Some madmen remove the smashed shell of the radioscope and the smoke climbing through its hull, remove the broken monitor spitting sparks, remove their own rotting bodies to a bone-pit at the center of the roof. All this painted on the canvas blinds that are raised from the bottom up, painted in among the painted gardens and stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over. They're waiting for traffic, for tempering liniment. They think there's a plane out there. We see from under some cathedral. State control towers effecting the merger between traffickers. November three eight one zero x-ray, climb and maintain. Every phone in the tower imagined rung. Headsets their only props, hallucinating static to mash their sweated temples. The pattern clears. The edificial monument is left incinerating near everyone. Thank whoever inclines topward, casts her ember lines lower. On the round rooftop a festered resting is left embanked in rings, a child at the middle embalmed, a waxy tinge. Limbs flayed to crouched vultures who would watch if the skin parched to vellum, but instead they eat away. Jackals or wolves surround a tower base. Pigment will be baked off polluted bones in a trench, then with wind and lime, gradually emaciated through coal and sand becoming lye unlimited stench. Bodies fall fast holding hands through smoke. They are not consumed in a moment.

Not far off there is our teeming seitch: a swarm of wasps, a rumble of soccer players. I believe in all the me there is. I substand the crowd as I belong to it, am indebted to it by one of my limbs, a hand or heel. I know the periphery is the only place I can be, that I would die if I let myself be drawn into the fray, but just as certainly if I let go. These beings are in constant motion and their movements follow no rhythm. They swirl, go north, then suddenly east; none of the individuals in the crowd remains in the same place in relation to the others. They move with the random walk which makes only those sounds natural to the desert. Nothing in their passage would tell that flesh moves here. A way of walking so deeply conditioned, their feet move of themselves, no no measurable rhythm to their pacing. Any sound could be ascribed to the wind, to gravity. No human passes here. So as I am in a perpetual motion leaves incoming. All this requires a high level of tension. It gives me a feeling of violent, vertiginous happiness from which I fail to fetch me me. I infold the crowd, I emit its twitch. It's no use now pretending to be multiple people, one giving another something. There's hardly enough of me left to make one respectable person. A range of crescents is fertile with grasses and shrubs and beyond them starforms where air will loose currants and limestone rolled to an eighth of a millimeter round. Pilings where only berry bushes grow, bonsaied by emigrant wind. A people cannot live on berries alone. Then again, Joy is senseless.

Mesquite and mistletoe and newly washed hair. Joy and I live as a fine emulsion. We climb into a defile to begin a catalog. We keep specimens in a hemmed and lined satchel. We sidestep back to back so that we do not miss a thing. Any creature that wore a human shape, that creature that wears a human shape, it looks like a beetle to us. Two dead owls lie like feather pillows emptied out on the twin yellow lines. Their bodies are warm and eyes stilled between blinks. Where other animals meld with the asphalt, their broken wings are like divots of turf, are heavy with death but could take flight at any moment. I wonder what we'd do if one suddenly rose up in life, huge talons twisting from twilight fell. Wing beats are what terrify. A cicada is a cold-blooded insect. It clings to twigs like an emblem for a lie in an inch, but the bug's lit out its shell. A sort of seedpod left to rattle an empire. And there a larval emperor on a hackberry bush languidly wishes to know who I am. The winged insect is a vector. The female is distinguished by a long proboscis. We hunt whiptail lizards to near extirpation, hang their broken bodies on the spines of prickly pear. We stalk songbirds to skin and mount, following the directions of a mail-order taxidermy kit. We collect in pairs, and we empanel all creatures in arcing rows. Joy flees from no fear. Joy flees. All tropical trees and plants, and every bird of every kind-every bird, every winged creature I assemble together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I bring Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I am stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at by swifts, by parrots, by cockatoos. I run into pagodas and am fixed for centuries at the summit or in secret rooms. I am idol, I am priest, I am worshipped, I am sacrificed. I flee from the wrath of Brahma through all the forests of Asia. Vishnu hates me. Shiva waits for me. I come suddenly upon Isis and Osiris. I have done a deed they say, at which the ibis and the crocodile tremble. I am buried for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the tomb of eternal pyramids. I am kissed with cancerous

kisses of the crocodile, and lie confounded with all unutterable things. With exhaustion an odorous sweat bathes all the body, turns cheeks pale and causes lips to swell. The bonds of the jaw are relaxed and through the throat labored breath passes faint and chill. And often either the livid nail or wrinkled nostril is the harbinger of death. Flames and ether make a rush for my veins, prophet of evil I ever am to myself.

Shall I make a list of things that support the house and skip the house itself? For example: the road into this town is not really a town, and the folkways want me tarred and feathered for a city that has undergone a number of revisions. Undulating terrain fans out before me. There is a straggling grove of poppies just to protect this pitied bit of territory. Less than ten households line what should be a road, printed plainly on the map. Here and there are branching paths made by basketcrews, and beyond threadbare sandbags embank rimmed holes none will dig themselves from. A ship and house could flow along, borne up by sand, but if I toss a cork stopper even it will be incorporated. A boat that would bloat on dented sand will cry much different qualities. A house shaped like a barrel which would pitch and toss with lines flowing like sighs before me. Ripples of sand moving dunes, and even a minimal heave could slough at once whatever sands had crept up onto the surface. Barreling as a tightly woven basket of grasses, but we could not endure the instability of a house that kept revolving all the time. On the front of the entry she hung a horizontal plaque: LOVE YOUR HOME. I shared Joy's space: a poor, friendless child, a partner in wretchedness's fine still niche. Apparently ten but hunger bitten and sufferings of that sort often make a child older than she is. And great joy, this poor creature expressed when she found that I was to be her companion through the hours and instances, fixed for centuries at the summit of quarters hardly large on each separate storey, but having nine storeys in all. Large enough to impress vividly the sense of echoing loneliness. From want of furniture, the noise of rats made uproar on the staircase and hall fell. We try to believe an island populated. We try to believe a desert vacant but neither is true. Only this, take this swallow, can show how heavens move, distend infinity, intensify the hours and let us see the emptiness of love, draw it out on moon-shaped wings. I dig nine days vainly from the chickenhouse for the remains of her infant child and husband. She implicates one place for

a headstone and another and another and another in nine different places on sand. She says Evidently the location of my own house has changed, shifted by the constant angling. She says Or perhaps it may have been the hole that shifted. Or the remains slipped under the thick wall of sand that separates my house from the next. The bodies might have moved into another's garden.

By worlds of mist and vapor as in a human atmosphere, leave two words simple as grass. A landscape contains the solution of what is lost. My chores, my little adventures across grass. Conjure me says a cactus to a wandering stone. Bring me from here to there, my only child. Paradise will not align imitations for flash or hour, but is jagged. Condemn the mountains and their roaring contours. Condemn the forests. Are there not flows of grass here? Look at that grass down there. Go first to your old plant and watch carefully the watercourse made by rain. For now the rain must have carried the seeds far away. Watch the crevices made by the runoff, and from them determine the direction of the flow. Then find the plant that is growing at the farthest point from your plant and all that grows in between is yours, sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones. You can pile nests for birds the size of us from all the clippings. Or it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven. Or now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves. If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles. You will hardly know who I am or what I mean (but I shall be of good health to you).

To arrest once and for all, the meaning of words-this is what terror wants. Writing and talk do not prove me. Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veiled, and I remove the veil, voices indecent by me clarified and transfigured. This is for those who will witness a world not held to its word. My enemy lies in stitches at the top, stuffed with the stuff that is coarse, stuffed with the stuff that is fine. One of a great nation. I tear him from your symbol and he turns into paper. A lender can keep a garment. I hush an emetic remedy in the Whispering Gallery: I will be my own scapegoat and yours. I set out before myself and I give up my say. To be in the middle, on the line of encounter, to not knowing endings, I would stoop to see the wood for the trees. My eyes are wholly white, looking back at something inside my own head: all-blue eyes of Joy seem to me more than all the print I have read in my life. The moth and the fisheggs are in their place. In no way should I concern myself with human relationships, but should get to the very bottom. Akin: grass: peoples: veils. Erasure is what makes a collective memory possible. All I can do is clear a plain with a pen point.

Let me try again: Love was not my intention. So I am on love but do I love before the world. This is not enough. Or Every love is a severe operation on a body yet to be formed. Envelope: an unexplored landscape and landscapes are populated by pure infinitive. Develop a name to come or already past. I become imperceptible by dismantling myself. Or Race along a line of flight from love. Thistle myself finally to be alone and to meet the true double at the other end of any one line. A clandestine passenger on a motionless voyage likes every other body. Flight is challenged when it is useless movement in space, flight is affirmed when it is stationary. And she has found her own way to no longer be in any body. And at this highest point someone is named with the most intense discernibility from the instantaneous apprehension of the packs to which he or she belongs. Always to seize from a mass, extract Joy from a group however small, in which Joy acts and adjusts. To find Joy's own packs, the multiplicities she encloses within herself, which may be of an entirely different nature and to join them to empty mine. Yet it can happen that one's line is another's imprisonment. All for Joy could have gone the other way. Could have gone: On The Morning a sliding cog calling out the emblazoned template name that would have bound to this machine without binding lines to joy at all. Enlivening a body again raising calls to embark through vesper-lit vales after swilling and liniments. A hand-linked embrace, an elbow tap, a wristed twitch, a bow when asked to bow to. Yet: a private naming from all befores is negation of heavenly nuptials and secret namings. A this an n can do at ten years old: a lie becomes a line of flight, composure, radiating from a pack of rats, a pack of freckles on a face, a pack of boys speaking through the voice of a woman, a clutch of girls in an Anne's voice. And still a horde of wolves in some body's throat is not enough: composition of the lines, of one line with another is a problem even with two lines of the same type. There is no assurance that two lines of flight will prove compatible,

compossible. There is no assurance the body will be easy to composte. We go through so many bodies in eachother. It's been so very long since I was something. A bird encircles a limb a thousand feet above where I stand and not finding shithell. For some time I still love honor and serve degeneracy wherever it flowers. So mine limbs twist from the firmament and I say Joy, I am icarused.